



3/14/2014

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Public Health Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to hear from each of us today on HB 5537.

My name is Melissa Olive and I am a resident of Woodbridge, CT. I have a doctorate in Educational Psychology and I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst at the Doctoral Level. I am here today to speak on HB 5537 section 42 number 6.

I first learned about Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) when I was 11. My mom, brother, and I were trained to use the techniques with my youngest brother, Mac, who has autism and intellectual disabilities. A few years later, I completed undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate coursework in special education with a strong focus in ABA. I went on to conduct research in ABA as well as to train special education teachers to use ABA in their classrooms.

While I was an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at Austin (2002), I developed and managed the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) approved coursework for the master's level students. I began supervising students in their independent fieldwork. I have also worked in private practice overseeing ABA services for children in their homes, communities, and schools. And most recently, I began teaching as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford where I teach Ethics and Profession Issues in Behavior Analysis and I Supervise a cohort of 6 thesis students who are each completing a thesis using ABA.

Please know that I am not here on behalf of USJ, the BACB, or any other entity. I am here as a practicing behavior analysis who resides in Woodbridge, CT but who works in locations such as New Haven, Sherman, Fairfield, Easton, Greenwich, Southbury, Trumbull, and Danbury.

By now you have either read a lot of testimony or you have heard from others about why they are opposed to or in support of this bill. While I have my opinions about the bill, I prefer to provide you with information about what is required to become a BCBA and what is required to be an SLP and let you see for yourself why HB 5537 section 42 [6] is not an appropriate proposal as it is written.

Please refer to the power point handouts at the end of my testimony. Specifically, you will see the BACB requirements for someone to become an appropriately trained behavior analyst. First, the person must possess a master's degree in an appropriate field. The master's degree or the post graduate training program must include 225 class hours in behavior analysis courses. The content must focus on ethics, definitions and characteristics, behavioral assessment, behavioral intervention, experimentally evaluating an intervention, selecting appropriate interventions, and measurement of behavior. Second, while completing the coursework (or soon after) the student must complete 1500 hours of supervised fieldwork through a University practicum or through their own work setting. Throughout that process, the student

APPLIED BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES

must meet with an appropriately trained supervisor who is also a BCBA for 2 hours at least every two weeks. Finally, when all of these steps have been completed, then the individual must sit for and pass the certification exam.

I have provided a couple of illustrative examples of programs in special education, stand alone post-graduate programs, or a full master's program focusing in behavior analysis. As you will see, regardless of whether it is special education, behavior analysis, or simply post-master's work, the coursework is all behavioral in nature.

Now let us look at programs within speech and language pathology. Please know, students in these programs are trained with equal rigor as behavior analysts. I know this because my minor at the doctoral level was in communication disorders. I took 5 courses with other doctoral students in speech and language pathology. These programs are extremely competitive and the smartest of the smart students apply and get selected. However, students in these programs do not take coursework focused on behavior. Instead, they complete courses in speech and language in order to implement intervention in speech, voice, and feeding/swallowing.

I have provided examples of programs at Southern Connecticut State University, the University of Connecticut, and Sacred Heart University (a new program). Many of these programs require undergraduate prerequisites in speech and language. As you will see, across the board, the graduate coursework focuses on areas such as fluency disorders, phonology disorders, language acquisition disorders, voice disorders, and aphasia. None of these courses focus on behavior, behavior analysis, behavior interventions, or even behavior assessment. The only way an SLP could possess the skills of a behavior analyst would be if that individual sought additional coursework in behavior analysis beyond the program in speech and language pathology (SLP).

Similarly, a behavior analyst is not prepared to implement speech and language services such as speech and sound (articulation, apraxia of speech), resonance (hypernasality, hyponasality), voice (pitch, loudness, respiration), fluency (stuttering, cluttering), language (phonology, morphology), and feeding and swallowing (oral, pharyngeal, laryngeal, esophageal) *unless* they have completed appropriate coursework and supervision to do so. I personally know several individuals who are both SLPs and BCBAs. Those individuals have been trained and supervised in implementing both types of services.

In closing, please know that I am not opposed to services provided by speech and language pathologists. I am opposed to including behavior analysis as part of their scope of practice. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions about this testimony.

Sincerely,



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Training to Become a Behavior Analyst

Board Certification in Behavior Analysis (BCBA)

1. Master's Degree in Behavior Analysis or other natural science, education, human services, engineering, medicine
2. 225 Hours of Coursework
3. 1500 Hours of Supervised Fieldwork
4. Passing the Exam

BACB Approved Coursework

- 225 classroom hours of graduate level instruction
- Ethical considerations - 15 hours
- Definition & characteristics and Principles, processes & concepts - 45 hours
- Behavioral assessment and Selecting intervention outcomes & strategies - 35 hours
- Experimental evaluation of interventions - 20 hours
- Measurement of behavior and Displaying & interpreting behavioral data - 20 hours
- Behavioral change procedures and Systems support - 45 hours
- Discretionary behavior-analytic content - 45 hours

BACB Supervised Fieldwork (by appropriately trained supervisor)

- Practicum at University
- Intensive Practicum at University
- Independent Fieldwork (1500 hours)
 - Meet with supervisor 2 hours every 2 weeks
 - Activities include:
 - Conducting behavioral assessments
 - Designing, implementing, and monitoring skill-acquisition and behavior-reduction programs
 - Overseeing the implementation of behavior-analytic programs by others;
 - Training, designing behavioral systems, and performance management;
 - Other activities normally performed by a behavior analyst

Example of SPED Program with Behavior Analysis Focus

- Ethical considerations – infused in each course
- ABA for teachers (Definition & Principles, etc)
- Challenging Behavior Class (assessment & intervention)
- Single Subject Design Class (experimental evaluation)
- Intervention in the Schools (selecting interventions)
- Communication Intervention (discretionary)
- Home School Collaboration (discretionary)
- Other Educational Courses not behaviorally based
 - Research and/or stats
 - Multi-cultural issues
 - SPED Law

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Behavior Analysis Coursework at USJ

- Course sequence if student holds master's degree in appropriate related field
- 1. Foundation of Behavior Analysis (3 credits)
- 2. Behavioral Assessment and Program Evaluation (3 credits)
- 3. Behavioral and Educational Interventions (3 credits)
- 4. Ethical and Professional Issues (3 credits)
- 5. Advanced Topics in Applied Behavior Analysis (3 credits)

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MS Program at USJ

1. Foundations of Behavior Analysis
2. Behavior Analysis and Program Evaluation
3. Behavior and Educational Interventions
4. Ethical and Professional Issues
5. Advanced Topics in Behavior Analysis
6. Autism: Nature and Characteristics
7. Autism: Assessment
8. Autism: Application of Instructional Strategies
9. Choose 1:
 - Autism: Communication and Technology
 - Autism: Social Interventions 3 Credits
 - Autism: Sensory and Motor Issues
10. Research Methods in Human Development
11. Evidence-Based Practices in Autism Spectrum Disorders
12. Human Growth and Development
13. Practice with Diverse Populations
14. Thesis Credits (Part I and II)

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Graduate Program in Communication Disorders at SCSU

- Undergraduate Prerequisites (not behavioral)
- Graduate Courses (none of which are behavioral)
 - Neurogenic Speech and Language Disorders
 - Research Methods in Communication Disorders
 - Disorders of Phonology
 - Cognitively Based Communication Disorders in Adults
 - Disorders of Fluency
 - Language Acquisition Disorders: Birth to Five
 - Language Acquisition Disorders: School Age
 - Voice and Velopharyngeal Disorders
 - Dysphagia
- Electives (none of which are behavioral)
- Practica (Speech & Language, School, Audiology, & Neuropathology)
- Thesis

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Graduate Program in Speech and Language at UConn

- Prerequisite courses (not behavioral)
- Clinical Practicum in SLP
- Motor Speech Disorders
- Dysphagia
- Language Disorders I: Birth to 5
- Articulation and Phonological Disorders
- Introduction to Research Methods
- Electives (one ABA course available)
- Clinical Practicum in SLP
- Aphasia
- Cognitive
- Communicative Disorders
- Language Disorders II: Kindergarten to 12
- Voice Disorders
- Fluency Disorders
- Practica
- Thesis or Project

New Program at Sacred Heart

- Introduction to Communication Disorders
- Phonetics
- Anatomy and Physiology of Speech and Swallowing
- Introduction to Audiology and Hearing Science
- Speech Science
- The Development of Language
- Neurological Bases of Communication and Swallowing
- Clinical Methods and Observation